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## NEW CABINET STARTS PARTY RESPONSIBILITY IN JAPAN

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President Wilson early characterized the great war as a war for democracy, and English and French statesmen have since echoed the expression. With that fact in mind, the question was early raised whether the spirit of harmony could last among the Allies, with democratic states on the one hand, and on the other Russia in the early days a despotism and Japan at best a very strongly centralized, imperialistic constitutional monarchy. Would not the differing ideals of government bring about a lack of harmony that would be fatal? Germany doubtless counted on such a conflict. Her intrigues with Mexico and Japan made clear her belief regarding the latter country. Her intrigues in Russia were, first, to weaken Russia's military power, and second, by force and treachery and bribery to disintegrate the new republic, then to dominate it herself.

Most Americans believe that at the end of the war it will be possible for Russia to have her steps guided safely in the direction of popular self-government. Japan has been and still is a problem that has raised serious question in the minds of many.

Japanese statesmen have claimed throughout that their aims were those of the Allies, and nobody has questioned, for the last two years at any rate, the sincerity and effectiveness of Japan's support of the war. Now, in the appointment of this new cabinet, we see Japan taking a real, important forward step toward democracy. In the new Hara cabinet we have for the first time in Japanese history a strictly party cabinet, that of the Seiyukai, for though the Ministers of War and Navy are not party men, the civilian members are, and it was organized as a party cabinet with the expressed purpose of holding the party responsible for results.

It is fair to say that Japan has been squinting in this direction for many years; it would hardly be accurate to say that one

could detect a steadily progressive movement in that direction. As long ago as 1900, Ito, Japan's great, possibly her greatest statesman, recognized that in the course of time popular self-government was bound to rule the world, and that Japan must take her place eventually by the side of the other nations. The writer recalls a personal conversation with one of Ito's trusted lieutenants at the time of the formation of the party, in which it was said almost with bated breath that the ultimate aim of the new party would be to introduce the principle of party responsibility as exemplified in Great Britain, with the intention that gradually, as time and opportunity would permit, full party responsibility reflecting the people's will would be attained. This same spokesman had accompanied Ito in that first great foreign tour made preliminary to the formation of the Japanese constitution when, with characteristic thoroughness, the constitutions and methods of administration of the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany—all the leading nations of the world—were studied in order that Japan might find the system best suited to her needs.

As we all know, just emerging from a form of government that was practically a personal despotism, the Japanese statesmen felt that the model best suited for them at that time was the German, the Prussian form of government; and the new imperial constitution, embodying those principles, was finally promulgated in 1889. From a date even preceding the adoption of the constitution by several years, however, there have always been in Japan leading thinkers who advocated the establishment of popular assemblies, the expression of the people's will, and the gradual assumption of responsibility by the people's representatives. The organization of the party which has now finally succeeded in taking the responsibility came in 1900; but until the present time, though parties have made their wishes felt in government, though the leaders in different governments have represented certain party views, no cabinet as a whole has been appointed to carry out a party policy with public recognition of its sole party responsibility.

We shall not be able to judge the full significance of this step until we see how successful it may be in carrying through any line of policy that it may undertake. As yet the party is responsible to the Emperor in all formal ways, and this first step may not lead to other progressive steps in the same direction without certain setbacks; but there is perhaps in the history of the war no

single event that signalizes better the progressive advance of the spirit of democracy than this establishment of the party cabinet in Japan.

The immediate cause of its formation may have been the rice riots, as has been suggested, in part; in part the conflict of opinions over the government's policy in Siberia; in part the determination to make Japan's policy toward China less political and more economic. Many factors probably contribute to the result, but underlying all of them there seems to have been the surging impulse of the democratic spirit, which is worldwide in its expression. It is hoped that the result will be permanent and beneficial.

The cabinet promises well in its personnel. Mr. Takashi Hara, the Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, is a statesman of wide experience in public life. He was "one of the right-hand men of Prince Ito when he raised the banner of the Seiyukai in 1900;" and from that time to this he has been a consistent advocate of this forward policy. He is not the only strong, progressive man in the cabinet. Baron Takahashi, the Minister of Finance, has long been known as one of the ablest, most progressive men of his country. With him in experience and ability is Viscount Uchida, the Minister for Foreign Affairs; and throughout, the cabinet is one that will command respect. The outlook is promising.

The list of the cabinet members follows: Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, Mr. Takashi Hara; Home Affairs, Mr. Takejiro Tokonami; Foreign Affairs, Viscount Yasuya Uchida; War, General Giichi Tanaka; Navy, Admiral Tomosaburo Kato; Finance, Baron Korekiyo Takahashi; Education, Mr. Tokygoro Nakahashi; Communications, Mr. Utaro Noda; Agriculture and Commerce, Mr. Tatsuo Yamamoto.